



Policy News

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The Children's Services Act (CSA) codifies a system of care designed to ensure the coordination across state and local child-serving agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the provision of services to children and families. Implementation of the CSA requires understanding of laws, policies, and best practices across a multitude of partner agencies and organizations. In order to provide practitioners a single reference to the policies adopted by the State Executive Council for Children's Services (SEC), the Office of Children's Services (OCS) has developed *The Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act* which can be found on the OCS website at <http://www.csa.virginia.gov/PDF/CSA%20Policy%20Manual%20-%202016%20revision.pdf>.

To ensure accuracy, the policy manual is updated annually to reflect policy changes adopted by the SEC. The most recent edition, which was updated in July 2016, includes two new policies adopted in 2016 as well as technical edits to service placement types. Below is some important information regarding the new SEC policies:

2.1.3 Individual Participation in State Executive Council Meetings by Electronic Means (Adopted March 17, 2016)

This policy allows individual members of the SEC to participate in meetings of the SEC, or public meetings of any committees established by the SEC, by electronic means as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.1. This policy applies to the entire membership of the SEC and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

According to policy 2.1.3, an individual member may participate in a meeting of the SEC through electronic communication from a remote location for any of the following reasons: personal emergency, medical condition, or if a member's residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location. There are provisions which specify required notification practices, quorum requirements, the means the member will use to facilitate their participation, and maximum usage of electronic participation.

2.4 Public Participation in Policy-making Actions (Adopted June 23, 2016)

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process of communication at all stages of policy making and to promote public involvement in the development, amendment, or repeal of policies of the State Executive Council for Children's Services (SEC). Additionally, this policy is designed to ensure that the SEC has the benefit of input from all relevant parties so that adopted policies are a reflection of CSA stakeholder interests.

As part of this commitment, Policy 2.4 directs the OCS to maintain a list of all persons who have requested to be notified of policy-making actions being considered by the SEC. All members of the SEC and the State and Local Advisory Team (SLAT) (§2.2-5201), all persons registered via the CSA website rosters as chairpersons of CSA Community Policy and Management Teams (CPMT, §2.2-5205) and CSA Coordinators shall be placed on the notification list without the necessity of a specific request.

In addition to the use of the notification list, OCS is responsible for informing the public of proposed policy-making actions of the SEC through the prominent display of current policy-making activities of the SEC on its website at www.csa.virginia.gov. Additionally, the OCS will maintain an electronic public comment link on their web site when policy is proposed, compile a summary of submitted public policy, and prepare a response to all public comments on the policy-making action which will be distributed to the members of the SEC for consideration.

Policy 2.4 also includes time frames to allow proper review and public input as well as stipulations for fiscal impact analysis and legal review of proposed policies.

For more information regarding the specific details of each of these two new SEC policies, please review the *Children's Services Act Policy Manual* which can be found on the CSA website at <http://www.csa.virginia.gov/PDF/CSA%20Policy%20Manual%20-%20202016%20revision.pdf>.